unscrupulously inquisitive American journalist, befriends them, and tries unsuccessfully to woo and wed the younger of the two girls - the pretty, but docile and innocent Francie. Through him, Francie meets Gaston Probert, a gentle and amiable product of the most Gallicised of American expatriate families. The Proberts are a family of Catholic Carolianians, who had migrated to Paris in the time of Louis Phillipe, and are more French than the Frenchmen in their exaggerated attachment to the French mode of life. Gaston falls in love with Francie, but his family consider her and her people too vulgar and too low for Gaston's position and status. They are, however, forced to give their consent reluctantly to the alliance by Gaston's determination to marry her. The jilted journlist lover. Flack, deceives Francie into divulging the secrets of the Probert family to him, and unscrupulously features every detail of their scandalous affairs in the gossip column of his American paper. *The Reverberator*: These shocking exposures infuriate the Proberts, and incite them to break up the proposed alliance. Gaston is placed in the dilemma of having to choose between his family and the dictates of his heart, and his choice is Francie, for whom he decides to renounce his family.

The theme of self-integrity links *The Reverberator* with the other novels of this period, i. e., with *The Bostonlans, The Princess Casamassima* and *The Tragic Muse,* and also anticipates *The Ambassa-•dors.* The quest for refinement brings the American pilgrims to Europe, and unless they are on their guard, they are sure to be corrupted by the superficial splendour of Europe. Refinement of manners, without an awareness of moral obligations, is no true refinement. The Europeanised Americans in *The Reverberator* have lost their moral spontaneity and their moral vitality because of their infatuation with the glittering superficialities of the European way of life. Gaston retains his moral consciousness as an American, and is therefore able to see through the banality of surfaces from which the

Proberts' assumed mode of life suffers.

Gaston's revolt against the tradition-minded Probert family is in fact a repudiation of the evil, which the adopted culture of Europe • has wrought in his native American culture. The conflict in Gaston is thus a clash between his own culture as an American, to which he yearns to remain true, and the step-culture of Europe, to which his family-is so devoted as to force his own devotion to it. His independent j existence as a moral being depends very much. on. tlxe choice